Star Herbert Coleman Dedicates Traveling Library -- Delta Gift to Northwest Georgia

Against the enchanting backdrop of Chattooga Walk in the Hotel Chatham, more than 150 sorority members and guests of Delta Sigma Theta Herbert Coleman, the 11-year-old traveling library by cutting ribbons of crimson and cream, the sorority's colors.

"I am happy," said the young singer as he clipped the ribbons, "to launch this Bookmobile for the children, farmers, housewives and other business people of Georgia, and I send you on your way with Godspeed." 

Behind the glittering ceremonies that put the Bookmobile into commission lies a story that began five years ago. At that time the National Library Committee of the sorority began a campaign to furnish books and reading material to underprivileged areas in the South. The committee was successful in collecting 28 baskets of 2100 books which they sent to Franklin County, N. C. for the use of rural school children. Spurred by the sorority's interest, a citizen's group in North Carolina then began a drive for funds within the state that ended with the building of the "Delta Library" in Louisburg County.

Encouraged by these successes, the sorority began planning to extend its library services to all areas through bookmobiles, or traveling libraries. After several discouraging setbacks, the first bookmobile was bought and equipped to service Howard Carrol and Haralson Counties in northwestern Georgia.

Role of Bookmobile
In explaining the role of this first bookmobile, Dorothy I. Height, national president of the sorority, told Sunday's guests that the Georgia State Department of Education and the Library Commission had expressed their gratitude to Delta for the bookmobile and quoted that it would be received as a welcome addition to the state's public services.

Miss Height said that the library is primarily intended for the use of Negroes in rural Georgia but its facilities would be available for the use of all of the rural people. Regular stations marked by appropriate signs would be placed along the route of the bookmobile and the time of visits posted in churches, schools and stores of business.

Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee, one of the speakers at the presentation ceremonies, told of some of the duties of the librarian who will be in charge of the bookmobile. Mrs. Lee, who is supervisor of Negro Public Libraries in North Carolina, said she was well acquainted with what was in store for the librarian.

Any librarian working in rural areas, she said, must be a salesman, teacher, psychiatrist, nurse, messenger and counselor to host or farm people. She might have to arrange the sale of a pie, or show a farmer that irons are more efficient than flax. But, she added, "We want to cultivate the idea that reading is fun."

Of a goat is not curative, deliver milk from one neighbor to another, or show the housewives how to alter some of the sewing patterns the bookmobile will have in stock. For these efforts, the grateful people will laden her with vegetables and flowers.

On Friday the sorority was host at a television luncheon at Tavern-on-the-Green in Central Park, which time the bookmobile was formally presented to the sorority. The program and sweepstakes were made its television debut on Station WNTB at "Date in Manhattan." At Chatham Walk.

Three founders of Delta Sigma Theta, Mary Cuff Black, Edith Young and Osceola M. Adams, the latter serving as mistress of ceremonies, were among the guests at Chatham Walk.

Acting chairman of the National Library Committee, N. L. Watkins, read congratulatory messages from Helen Hayes, Mary Martin, Katharine Hepburn, Eleanor Roosevelt and a host of famous friends. Sorority curators were thanked for their services.